

# Scotland

Story and Photos by SPC Jason M. Cauley



# Tattoo

ONE of the Army's top performance groups — the U.S. Army Drill Team, part of the 3rd U. S. Infantry (The Old Guard) — recently wrapped up a triumphant month-long tour in Scotland by performing at the world's largest military pageant, the famed Edinburgh Military Tattoo. The team was part of a nearly 1,000-member cast, which performed nightly at Edinburgh Castle's historic esplanade before sell-out crowds. The tattoo included units from all over the world.

"It was an outstanding opportunity for the Army Drill Team and the Army as a whole," said the team's commander, CPT Nathan Howard.

The British Broadcasting Company taped three performances of the 56th tattoo, which aired over its affiliates worldwide. The idea of performing for such a vast audience might have unnerved some of team members.

"You couldn't help but think about it before each show," said SPC James Denson, a team member who began each finale by tossing his rifle 15 feet through the air to a fellow member of the drill team at the rear of a four-man column.

"During the performances, however, there was no time to be nervous. We just went out and did what we had trained to do," Denson said.

The team, which was performing outside the United States for the first time since 2000, also enjoyed a rare opportunity to interact professionally and socially with foreign military regiments. Among them were units from Australia, Oman, Bermuda and South Korea. The Drill Team even played a game of basketball with the South Korean soldiers.

"It was great fun," said soloist SPC Duane Randall. "Opportunities like that are great for fostering relationships with other countries. In this day and age it's something I feel we should be doing more often."

CPL Joe Oh, an interpreter for the South Korean army, echoed Randall's sentiment.

"Our soldiers were happy to have the opportunity to play with the Americans," he said. "We found we gravitated to Soldiers of the U.S. Army Drill Team, as they were one of the more approachable and enjoyable groups at the tattoo."

The Old Guard Soldiers and other contingents arrived in Edinburgh only six days before the first performance, yet the show was ready and staged in less than one week.

Tattoo production manager Steve Walsh said the secret to the show's success was in its planning. "All of the acts were scheduled, for the most part, up to three or four years in advance," he said.

The U.S. Army Drill Team members left each night's performance satisfied that they had given their all, Howard said. "We certainly left Scotland feeling honored, and with our heads held high." 🇺🇸

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▲ U.S. Army Drill Team commander CPT Nathan Howard gives the salute at the beginning of the team's performance.

(Top of page) Drum Major Ozzy Oswald from the Pipes and Drums of the 1st Battalion, Argyll and Southerland Highlanders, is the official tattoo bandmaster.